

I am particularly pleased that this legislative package will provide funding to modernize schools in Texas. According to preliminary estimates, El Paso-area school districts could receive tens of millions of dollars in funding for renovation projects, Title I grants to help disadvantaged children, and grants for special education. Our schools have been neglected for far too long and this important funding will ensure that our children have the labs, classrooms, and libraries that are necessary to learn and compete in a global economy.

The legislation's huge investment in our nation's roads, bridges, and mass transit systems will greatly assist several projects in my district that have gone without necessary repairs and upgrades for years. By investing in these neglected projects we will create good jobs as well as make much needed improvements to our nation's infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this economic recovery bill that will help average Americans, as well as cash-strapped state and local governments, weather this current economic downturn.

TRIBUTE TO HON. BETTY J.
LESTER, J.S.C.

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 23, 2009

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues here in the House of Representatives to join me as I rise to recognize the Honorable Betty J. Lester for her many years of service to the community and to congratulate her upon her historic retirement from the Essex County Superior Court bench. I would like to express my personal thanks and voice the gratitude of the many people for whom she has paved the path and set standards of excellence.

Judge Lester holds the distinction of being the first African American female judge in Essex County and the second African American female judge to be appointed to the superior court bench in New Jersey. As a trail-blazing woman of color, Judge Lester has built a great legacy in her 32 years of service to the city of Newark, Essex County, and the State of New Jersey.

Judge Lester has served on many committees of the Supreme Court including the Committee to Study New Jersey Bar Admission, the Committee on Municipal Courts, the Task Force on Women in the Courts, the Task Force on Municipal Improvement, and the Task Force on Minority Concerns. She has been a member of the New Jersey State Bar Association, the Essex County Bar Association, and the National Association of Women Judges. On the national level, Judge Lester was appointed as a commissioner for the Commission on Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies.

Madam Speaker, I know my colleagues agree that Judge Lester is an excellent role model for women and minorities in the law profession. She will leave a lasting impact on those who were fortunate enough to benefit from her guidance. I am pleased to join all those in attendance in wishing her a wonderful retirement.

HONORING WANDA ELLIS MITCHELL ON HER SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

HON. GENE GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 23, 2009

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend Mrs. Wanda Ellis Mitchell on a lifetime of work and dedication to the Baytown community and the people of Texas.

Mrs. Mitchell spent the past 14 years of her life serving the city of Baytown as the director of the Baytown Historical Museum. Under Mrs. Mitchell's leadership the Baytown Historical Museum has added many exciting collections given by volunteer donors, including from one of her former junior high students, the grandson of the great Ashbel Smith of Texas. Even though he had been asked by the University of Texas at Austin to acquire his grandfather's historical belongings, he declined and chose to give those historical belongings of his grandfather's to Mrs. Mitchell to preserve and display them in the Baytown Historical Museum.

Mrs. Mitchell has lived in Baytown, TX, since the age of 1. She served the community in many different ways; among others, she served the community as a teacher and director of Baytown Historical Museum. The City of Baytown greatly appreciates her service and dedication to the community. Her absence in the community will be greatly missed, and I know the community wishes her all the best when she moves with her husband Seth to Corpus Christi to live close to her daughter.

It is with great pleasure that I recognize Mrs. Wanda Ellis Mitchell for her service to the Baytown Historical Museum and the city of Baytown.

IN RECOGNITION OF AMANDA
LAGERGREN UPON HER
ACHIEVEMENT OF THE
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA
TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 23, 2009

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Amanda Lagergren, who has received Escambia County, Florida's Teacher of the Year Award for 2010. Her passion and dedication prove that teachers can truly make a difference in the lives of their students, and I am proud to honor such an admirable leader of our local community.

Ms. Lagergren began her teaching career at Edgewater Elementary in 2006 as a 5th Grade General Education Teacher. While maintaining her usual teaching duties for class, she has gone above and beyond by working both inside and outside of the classroom to better her students' lives. As Grade Level Chair for the 5th Grade, Ms. Lagergren ensures that her teachers have everything necessary to provide the best education to their students. Her membership on the Continuous Improvement Model Team and Accelerated Reading Committee highlights her focus on improving the

reading abilities of Edgewater Elementary's pupils. An expertise in classroom technology makes her a valuable asset to other teachers, and she recently began mentoring new educators on effective teaching methods and classroom models. For the past three years, Ms. Lagergren has inspired both her students and her colleagues with her dedication to teaching, and she is to be admired for her passion.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I would like to thank Ms. Lagergren for her public service to the students and community of Northwest Florida. Vicki and I wish her and her family best wishes for continued success.

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE
LAKE WORTH COMMUNITY HIGH
SCHOOL DEBATE TEAM

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 23, 2009

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the debate team of Lake Worth Community High School in Lake Worth, Florida. The team recently competed in a 22-school tournament and took home five awards. Pierre Dorsainvil won best presiding officer; Shermeeka Scott, best speaker and best presiding officer; Gia Cerease, original oratory; and Jennifer Price, first overall for declamation.

I am very proud of these fine young people for their skill as debaters and for the many hours of hard work and dedication that resulted in their supremacy over so many other schools. I am delighted, though not surprised, to know that a school in my district is providing an excellent education in the fine art of oratory. It is a skill that my esteemed colleagues and I value very highly, and I hope that some of these talented students will join us in Congress some day.

CELEBRATING THE 50TH WEDDING
ANNIVERSARY OF RICHARD AND
CONSTANCE SMITHGALL

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 23, 2009

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the long-standing and happy marriage of two of my constituents, Richard and Constance Smithgall. This March 9 they will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary with a ceremony at Weeki Wachee State Park in Hernando County, Florida.

Richard and Constance first took their wedding vows at the Grace Baptist Church in Binghamton, New York on March 7, 1959. They have since moved to Spring Hill, where they have lived for the past ten years. The happy couple enjoys their new life in Florida, where Constance has retired from her job and Richard continues to work part time at Home Depot.

During the ceremony commemorating their 50th anniversary, the Smithgalls will have